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**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT
AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Date of Deposit: July 11, 2003

Applicant(s): J. TAKEDA et al

Serial No. :

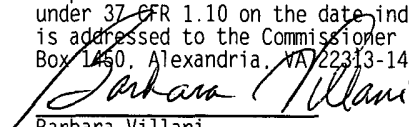
Filed : Herewith

+For : CONNECTOR

Art Unit :

Examiner :

I hereby certify that this paper is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450


Barbara Villani

In the event that this Paper is late filed, and the necessary petition for extension of time is not filed concurrently herewith, please consider this as a Petition for the requisite extension of time, and to the extent not tendered by check attached hereto, authorization to charge the extension fee, or any other fee required in connection with this Paper, to Account No. 06-1378.

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Asst. Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

S I R :

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute amended claims 5-7 as follows, and add new claims 9-16.

5. **(amended)** A connector as claimed in claim 2, wherein said at least one slot is at least one slit.

6. **(amended)** A connector as claimed in claim 2, wherein said at least one slot is at least one groove.

7. **(amended)** A connector as claimed in claim 2, wherein said at least one slot each comprises a first slot extending in the first axis, and a second slot extending in the second axis.